

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 9900

FOR AMB SCHAUFEL FROM WISNER

E.9. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH UK
SUBJ: OPINION IN RHODESIA: ALLAN SAVORY ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES

1. ALLAN SAVORY, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE MODERATE
WHITE OPPOSITION RHODESIA PARTY, CALLED ON US THE
AFTERNOON OF DEC 13 AND GAVE A RATHER DISCONCERTING
OVERVIEW OF WHITE AND BLACK OPINION IN RHODESIA.

2. POLARIZATION AMONG BLACKS. SAVORY SAID RHODESIAN
BLACKS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY POLARIZED ALONG
TRIBAL LINES. HE PERSONALLY TOOK CREDIT FOR GETTING
THE GOVERNMENT TO CURB THE WORST EXCESSES OF THE
RHODESIAN BROADCASTING SERVICE WHOSE AFRICAN PROGRAMS
HAD BEEN CONTRIBUTING TO THE TREND BY PLAYING ON
TRADITIONAL INTER-TRIBAL HOSTILITIES AND FEARS
ABOUT THE FUTURE. THE PROGRAMS, BROADCAST IN DIFFERENT
LANGUAGES AND FREQUENTLY RESORTING TO TRIBAL
SLURS, INCITED LISTENERS TO RESIST BEING DOMINATED
BY OPPOSING TRIBES. THE POLARIZATION IS REFLECTED
IN COMPOSITION OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES.
FOR EXAMPLE, ALMOST ALL THE KARANGAS, AS WELL AS THE
NDEBELES, HAVE DESERTED MUZOREWA'S ANC, THE FORMER
FOR MUGABE, THE LATTER TO JOIN NKOMO. INCIDENTS
OF TRIBAL CONFLICT ARE ON THE INCREASE, AND ORDINARY
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BLACKS ARE BEING INTIMIDATED INTO DECLARING THEIR

ALLEGIANCES BY CADRE OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES.

3. ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY CHANCE THAT A NEW MODERATE AFRICAN PARTY MIGHT BE FORMED THAT WOULD SEEK A DEAL WITH SMITH ALONG LINES OF THE FIVE POINTS, SAVORY SAID THE CHANCES OF THIS WERE NIL. WHILE THERE ARE A FEW "STOOGES" AROUND THAT MIGHT TAKE THE BAIT, THEY HAVE NO AFRICAN FOLLOWING. SAVORY REMARKED THAT A GROUP OF BLACK BUSINESSMEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE TREND IN GENEVA HAD FAILED TO GET EVEN ENOUGH BACKING TO SEND A DELEGATION TO EXPRESS THESE CONCERNS TO THE NATIONALIST LEADERS. SMITH'S PROPAGANDA MACHINE BY FAWNING ON MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE HAS ONLY SUCCEEDED IN TURNING MORE BLACKS TO MUGABE AND NKOMO. EVEN BLACK BUSINESSMEN, SAVORY SAID, ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE OFFERINGS TO MUGABE'S CAMP, SENSING THAT HE PROBABLY REPRESENTS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE.

4. WHITE OPINION. THREE FACTORS IN PARTICULAR ARE AFFECTING WHITE MORALE, ACCORDING TO SAVORY. THE FIRST IS THE VERY REAL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY INSURGENTS AGAINST WHITES, WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT PUBLICITY, WHICH IS CONTRIBUTING TO BOTH WHITE INTRANSIGENCE AND FEARS ABOUT THE FUTURE. SECOND, INCREASING TRIBAL HOSTILITIES ARE LEADING MANY TO BELIEVE THAT AN ANGOLA-LIKE CIVIL WAR, WHICH THEY REGARD AS THE WORST POSSIBLE PROSPECT, IS UNAVOIDABLE.

5. LASTLY, WHITE OPINION IS PRISONER TO THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA, WHICH HAS PORTRAYED SMITH AS UTTERLY REASONABLE FOR ACCEPTING THE KISSINGER PROPOSALS AND THE NATIONALISTS AS EXTREME AND DEVIANT FOR CONTINUING TO REJECT THEM. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE COMPETING MEDIA TO GIVE WHITES A DIFFERENT VIEW OF EVENTS IN GENEVA, AND EFFORTS BY WHITE MODERATES, LIKE SAVORY, TO PRESENT A DIFFERENT VIEW ARE NOT GIVEN COVERAGE. AS A RESULT, SMITH HAS GAINED WHITE SUPPORT FOR HIS POSITION AND FACES LITTLE INTERNAL PRESSURE TO CHANGE. ACCORDING TO SAVORY, SMITH'S CONFIDENTIAL

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BACKING HAS NEVER BEEN STRONGER, EVEN WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY, AND MANY ARE PREPARED TO RESIST UNTIL THE END AGAINST ALL ODDS. THE END RESULT, HOWEVER, IS THAT WHITES ARE LOSING CONFIDENCE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A SETTLEMENT THAT PROTECTS THEIR FUTURE, AND MORE PEOPLE ARE LEAVING, WITH QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS BEING THE FIRST TO GO. VIRTUALLY EVERYONE, INCLUDING SAVORY'S OWN FAMILY, IS MAKING PLANS TO LEAVE,

THOUGH SAVORY THINKS MOST WHITES WILL WAIT TO SEE
WHWT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT LOOKS LIKE BEFORE MAKING
A FINAL DECISION.

6. THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM, AS SAVORY SEES IT, IS
THAT SMITH IS NOT SINCERELY COMMITTED TO BLACK
MAJORITY RULE. IF HE WERE, HE WOULD HAVE ACTED IN
A MORE CONCILIATORY FASHION IN BOTH RHODESIA AND
GENEVA, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD HAVE GONE QUITE
DIFFERENTLY. SAVORY IS CONVINCED THAT SMITH SEES
THE FIVE POINTS AS A WAY OF FRUSTRATING MAJORITY RULE
AND PERPETUATING WHITE DOMINATION, HENCE SMITH'S
REFUSAL TO DEPART FROM THEM. IF SMITH WERE PREPARED
TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO CONVINCE THE NATIONALISTS
THAT HIS COMMITMENT IS SINCERE, SAVORY BELIEVES
THAT THE MAJORITY OF WHITES WOULD GO ALONG WITH A
SETTLEMENT ON DIFFERENT TERMS THAT WOULD ALSO BE
ACCEPTABLE TO THE NATIONALISTS. CATTO

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